



Model in Newark Museum shows Leni-Lenape braves returning to their village on the Passaic about 1620. Indians of this tribe seldom used wigwams and lived in community houses in which a considerable number of natives might assemble. William Penn, describing the Leni-Lenape habitations, in 1683 said: "They bent down the bows of saplings and

interlaced them, covering this framework with bark quite thick enough to provide a warm shelter. Sometimes they made walled huts, circular or cylindrical in form, thickened and with an inner wall of mats woven from long reed grass or from sweet flag stalks. Their bedding was the skins of wild animals, usually the garments they were when abroad."

When Newark Was Younger

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As we cross the Passaic River in a few seconds by train, by auto or by bus, it is hard to realize how much of the life of Newark used to center on and near the stream. This was so for over 200 years.

The Passaic was an important part of the life of the Leni-Lenape, our Indian predecessors in the valley. Though Robert Treat and his companions found no one living on the site of Newark when their little sailing vessels brought them through Long Island Sound and up Newark Bay, they saw huge piles of oyster and clam shells, marking the spots where the Indians camped. About 50 years ago, workmen digging a sewer along Gully road, now Herbert place,

about ditching and draining the lands in "the Neck," Here each family received a lot for the raising of salt hay, and here each Spring, they burned away the marsh grass and swamp cedars.

LONG distance travel was by water in those early days. Within 10 years after the founding of Newark, the settlers owned a boat which carried produce to New York and Elizabethtown and brought back purchases. Not until 1765 was a direct land route to New York established. Shown on early maps as the "Plank Road" it followed closely the present Ferry street. Here Washington's coach crossed the ferry when he returned home from the Evacuation Day cere-

The Passaic, Sparkling River of Early Days, Was Vital Waterway Supplying Needs of Both Red Man and Settler

found four or five skeletons, with many stone hammers and arrow points, marking an Indian burying ground on the high bank near Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.

Originally a wooded bluff followed the river from the present Pennsylvania River bridge north to Second River. Below the cliff was a narrow strip of marsh along the water's edge. When the woods were cleared, streets cut through and buildings put up, most of the bluff was leveled away.

As the settlers from New England sailed up Newark Bay, they were not dismayed by the stretches of wet meadows they saw. They were accustomed to marsh lands around their Branford, Conn. homes, and they early set

monies in New York in 1783.

It was a great day for Newark when a bridge across the Passaic was built in 1794. This was at the present Bridge street, where a path descended steeply to the river. The corduroy road built at same time led through dense white cedar swamps, where stage coaches were frequently held up by robbers. How the robbers survived the onslaughts of the marsh mosquitos is not told. A traveler in 1796 tells how the pests "continue sucking your blood, if not disturbed, till they swell to four times their ordinary size, when they burst from their fullness."

THE oldest road along the Passaic is the present River (Continued on Following Page)



Market street, east of Mulberry, about 1825, with the Plank road turning right toward the meadows and the ferry. Commercial dock is on the left. Mulberry street, known from the times of the settlers as "East Back Street," got its present name sometime about 1800, when many mulberry trees were planted after the town became impressed with the prospects of silkworm culture.

WHEN NEWARK WAS YOUNGER

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road, which was a well-defined trail leading north to the Indian village at Acquackanonk, now Passaic, laid out in the 17th Century, as a road from Newark to Pompton, it was followed by George Washington in his retreat through New Jersey in 1776, after his destruction of the Passaic River Bridge at Acquackanonk. In the 19th Century, the drive along River road was one of the loveliest in all North Jersey, with great trees overhanging the clear and peaceful river. Green Island, opposite Frank Forester's home, the Cedars, luxuriant with sedges, cat tails and rose mallow, was a favorite haunt of fishermen and pleasure parties, until the Erie Railroad bridge took it over.

As late as 1860 there were no business establishments on the river north of Clay street except the lime kiln dock at Woodside. Where the Normal School now stands the Phil Kearney homestead, faced the Passaic, its lawn sloping to the water's edge.

THE Passaic was then a paradise for fishermen. School boys played hockey to go crashing in its creeks and inlets or to catch shrimp off the Center street bridge. Perch and pickerel were caught all along the river and nets for shad, smelt and bass were spread opposite River road. Men still talk about the days when a boat could be rented for 10 cents an hour, or \$1 for the day.

The docks that lined the river from "Down Neck" to Clay street were favorite swimming places. Boys learned diving from log piles at the sawmill, and fished their lives where Jackson's lane, now Oriental street, ended in a gravelly beach that shelved off abruptly.

By 1905 the old residents were looking back nostalgically at the days when the Passaic was so sparkling clear that "it was easy to see objects on the bottom at a depth of 10 or 15 feet." The sewage from a dozen towns had come to pollute the river, and the boy who ventured into the water came out with his body covered with oil and tar.

NEARLY 40 years ago the agitation for purifying the river came to a head in the establishing of the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission. On August 2, 1924, when the gates were opened turning the sewage of North Newark away from the river and toward New York Bay the Newark Yacht Club broke out its pennant in hopes that the jolly boating days would return.

The Passaic is cleaner today, but gone is the lovely sparkling river of early days. The boating clubs provide another story, to be told in a later issue.



Artist's conception (published around 1878) of the landing of the Puritans in May, 1664, at a spot believed located somewhere between the Market street and Center street bridges. According to tradition,

the first person to set foot on Newark's shores was Elizabeth Swaine, the daughter of one of the leading founders, and the scene shows her being helped from the boat by Josiah Ward whom she afterward married.



Clubhouses along River road in the gay '90s, from a book of Newark "Views" in the Public Library. The Passaic, before pollution of the river, "was beautifully clear . . . and it was easy to see objects on the bottom

at a depth of 10 or 15 feet." Shrimp and crabs were caught at the Center Street Bridge and just beyond was a famous place for catching striped bass and white perch. Smelt and sturgeon ran up as far as the dam.



View of the ceremony in Saybrook place in May, 1916, during dedication of a monument marking approximate site where Robert Treat and Connecticut Puritans set foot on land which afterward became Newark. The occasion,

in which founders' descendants took part commemorated the city's 250th anniversary. The memorial was the work of Gutzon Berglum, modeler of Newark's Lincoln which stands in front of the Court House.